

**CITY OF BOULDER
MEMORANDUM**

TO: Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

FROM: Susan Richstone, Deputy Director, CP&S
Lesli Ellis, Comprehensive Planning Manager, CP&S
Courtland Hyser, Senior Planner, CP&S
Jean Gatza, Sustainability Planner, CP&S
Caitlin Zacharias, Associate Planner, CP&S



DATE: September 28, 2015

SUBJECT: Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan 2015 Update – Briefing on Foundational Work, Community Kick Off, Focused Topics, and Next Steps

PURPOSE

The purpose of this item is to provide an update on the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP) 2015 Update and receive feedback on the foundational work to date (i.e., Trends Report, projections, fact sheets, and mapping); the community engagement plan and input so far; the initial focused topics for the BVCP update; and next steps for the 18-month project.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Role in the BVCP

The BVCP is jointly adopted by the City of Boulder (“city”) (Planning Board and City Council) and Boulder County (“county”) (County Commissioners and Planning Commission). While this board is not responsible for approving the plan, staff is seeking feedback and ideas from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board about relevant policy areas of the plan, including any topics related to parks, recreation, greenways, physical health and well being, urban service standards and criteria, as well as community engagement. The planning team will advance the feedback to the four approval bodies at their meetings in December 2015.

Feedback

Does the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board have ideas, feedback, or questions about:

1. Community engagement and next steps?
2. Focused topics for the 2015 update and/or specific policy areas relevant to PRAB, including integration of relevant policy areas from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan?
3. Foundational information (i.e., Community Profile, draft Trends Report, Subcommunity Fact Sheets, 2040 projections)?

BACKGROUND

Plan Purpose and Joint Adoption

The BVCP is the community's plan for the future. The core components of the plan include policies and maps. The policies are intended to guide decisions about growth, development, preservation, environmental protection, economic development, affordable housing, culture and the arts, urban design, neighborhood character and transportation for the next 15 years. Two maps, namely the Land Use and Area I, II, III Maps, define the desired land-use pattern and location, type, and intensity of development.

Despite its 15 year horizon, the BVCP is updated every five years to respond to changed circumstances or evolving community needs and priorities.

Since the 1970s, the City of Boulder ("city") (Planning Board and City Council) and Boulder County ("county") (County Commissioners and Planning Commission) have adopted the plan jointly. The ongoing collaboration to address issues of shared concern is relatively unique among communities.

2015 Update

The webpage for the 2015 update and portal for interested participants to sign up for project updates is: www.bouldervalleycompplan.net. The webpage also includes a link to the 2010 plan and maps. The 2015 BVCP update will carry forward long-standing core values, as noted (above). Additionally, an updated plan will be able to more clearly and graphically convey the community's vision; better align the city organization and its services; provide clear guidance and tools for implementation; and include metrics to monitor progress, among other goals for the update.

Plan Implementation

The plan is the overarching policy guide for the community. As such, its policies tend to be less detailed than those that are found in the city's 20+ master plans. The BVCP is implemented through many means as shown in the graphic to the right. The BVCP's land use map sets parameters around future growth and guides development standards and zoning, and regulations in the Boulder Land Use Code are largely instrumental in guiding development to achieve plan goals consistent with the land use map. The city and county closely adhere to the BVCP as guided by an intergovernmental agreement.

BVCP Core Values

(p. 9, 2010 Plan)

1. Sustainability as a unifying framework to meet environmental, economic, and social goals
2. A welcoming and inclusive community
3. Culture of creativity and innovation
4. Strong city and county cooperation
5. A unique community identity and sense of place
6. Compact, contiguous development and infill that supports evolution to a more sustainable urban form
7. Open space preservation
8. Great neighborhoods and public spaces
9. Environmental stewardship and climate action
10. A vibrant economy based on Boulder's quality of life and economic strengths
11. A diversity of housing types and price ranges
12. An all-mode transportation system to make getting around without a car easy and accessible to everyone
13. Physical health and well-being



Feedback and Input to date

A summary of all the feedback to date, including input from boards and commissions, public events and online polls, and Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), Planning Board, Planning Commission, and City Council will be updated regularly and can be found on the [project webpage](#).

Staff also has met monthly with a BVCP Process Subcommittee (Elise Jones and Lieschen Gargano - Boulder County; Sam Weaver, Macon Cowles, John Gerstle, and Leonard May - City of Boulder) to brief them on Update progress and receive guidance on ways to effectively develop and implement public involvement opportunities.

Work Plan and Schedule

The project began earlier this year with focus on the technical foundational work and development of a community engagement plan and kick off events. The plan process will continue through summer 2016. Input and guidance received to-date from elected officials, boards and commissions, and the public has resulted in continual refinements to the process and approach for the 2015 BVCP update schedule. The four phases will each entail extensive community dialogue and engagement. **The project timeline is on the project webpage, [here](#).**

Phase 1—Foundations and Community Engagement Plan (to August 2015)

Phase 2—Issues Scoping with Community (through fall 2015)

Phase 3—Analyze and Update Plan Policies and Maps (fall 2015 - early 2016)

Phase 4—Prepare Draft Plan for Adoption, Extend IGA (to mid 2016)

Implementation steps, such as changes to code and zoning map updates would be completed following plan adoption.

During **Phase 1—Foundations/Community Engagement Plan**—the planning team is completing the background data collection, projections, Trends Report, creation of subcommunity fact sheets, and preparation for interactive, 3D, and visualization maps.

The short **Phase 2—Issues Identification—currently underway** is aimed at working with the community to refine and solidify the priority issues to be addressed through the 2015 BVCP update through 2016.

Phase 3—Plan Analysis and Updated Policies and Maps—is a longer phase starting in the fall aimed at doing the substantive work to develop choices and analysis for the plan update as well as the “housekeeping” updates to align it better with plans and policies. Several events/milestones will provide opportunities for the community to help shape the plan.

During this phase, the team will advance the 3D modeling and visualization tools to help convey conditions, options, and tradeoffs. Policy refinements and additions (e.g., adding arts and culture, climate commitment policies, local foods, etc.) will also occur with community input. Gaps in metrics to measure plan outcomes will be identified and the full set of measurements further refined. Finally, the Land Use Plan and Area maps will be updated, reflecting input and analysis from the public request process as well as scenarios and analysis.

Finally, **Phase 4—Draft Plan and IGA**—will synthesize all the previous phase deliverables in a draft plan for consideration/adoption. Additionally, the “Comprehensive Development Plan Intergovernmental Agreement” (IGA) between the city and county (valid through Dec. 31, 2017) will need to be updated before its expiration.

Community Engagement

The city and county are aiming for an open and engaging update process that is focused on critical issues. The process should result in a useful, relevant, and updated plan completed in 2016. The update will entail extensive, authentic community dialogue and engagement as described in the Community Engagement Plan. A Draft Community Engagement Plan can be found [on the project webpage](#). Staff has continued to refine the engagement plan based on feedback and has worked with a consultant, Heather Bergman to make improvements to it. Recent and ongoing engagement events include:

- **Kickoff Event** - A communitywide “Boulder 2030” kickoff event was held on Monday, August 31 at Chautauqua. The event included previews of videos and presentations about the plan and its role, information about current conditions and trends, interactive ways of capturing community input, and family activities. About 225 members of the public attended the event, excluding staff and support personnel.
- **Culturally-Appropriate Engagement** – Staff and decision-makers seek a meaningful engagement process with Boulder’s immigrant communities and culturally-appropriate venues and processes. The approach focuses on one-on-one conversations with community leaders and spokespeople, building on their knowledge and trust within the community; working with bilingual partners at events or “pop-up” meetings using comment forms in Spanish and English; partnering with Intercambio to get input from immigrant students in English classes.
- **Outreach with Civic, Businesses, and Community Groups** - Staff is in the process of reaching out to civic, nonprofit, and other organizations and offering to have a city staff member join them to talk about the update process and hear input.
- **Pop-Up Meetings** - “Pop-up” meetings in conjunction with events and at gathering places will occur around town in August and September. Their purpose is to provide information, increase awareness about the plan process, invite people to engage, and ask initial questions about what people love and consider to be issues facing the community.
- **Youth Engagement** – Some of the pop-up meetings and other events are geared for younger segments of the community – children, youth, and university students. YOAB and Growing Up Boulder are partnering with the planning team.
- **BVCP Statistically Valid Survey** – Staff with RRC Associates worked with the four approval bodies to develop a survey and get feedback in August. In mid-September, RRC will be distributing the survey to 6,000 households with follow-up focus groups. It is expected that results of the survey and focus groups will be available in November.
- **Boards and Commissions** – the planning team will be updating city boards and commissions on the plan and inviting early input between September and December. Dates for meetings with boards and commissions are identified under “Next Steps.”
- **Local Listening Sessions** – The city (and in some cases the county) will coordinate local listening sessions around the community in the fall to share the fact sheets and information about the local community and hear from community members about issues of relevance in different parts of the community. The process committee will advise on best timing and locations for local listening sessions.
- **Data and Trends Discussions** – The planning team also held several drop in sessions geared to allow discussion of the more technical aspects of the project -- data, trends, forecasts and maps.

ANALYSIS AND FOUNDATIONAL WORK

This section highlights the work completed to date to aid in future conversations about the 2015 plan update.

Community Profile

The 2015 Community Profile, partially updated in April and mostly complete as of Aug. 31, 2015, provides a snapshot of the Boulder community. It can be [found here](#).

2040 Projections

During each five year update, the city updates the long term (i.e., 25 year) projections for housing units and jobs. Projections give a broad sense of what type, location, and pace of housing and jobs might occur communitywide *based on current adopted policies*—reflecting what could happen under current zoning and reasonable assumptions regarding demographic and household trends and economic growth. They help inform conversations about the kind of future Boulder wants and potential changes to current policies. They do not represent a “given.” For example, in the past, the city has made changes to land uses – from commercial and industrial to mixed use and residential – based on the projections and community-defined priorities and desired future outcomes. Once the plan and projections are updated, city departments such as transportation, parks, and utilities use them to plan for system needs in long range master plans.

Projections have their limitations for planning. They are not particularly helpful when it comes to discussing quality or character of development or social issues (e.g., diversity, cost of housing, types of future jobs and incomes, etc.). Additionally, they are not useful at the site-specific level because the methods of calculation are based on broad assumptions.

In general, the BVCP projections are based on a Geographic Information Systems model estimating capacity. **Attachment C** contains the full report, maps, sources of data, and methodology that accompany the projections. For additional details, refer to the *2015-2040 BVCP Projections Methodology* on www.BoulderValleyCompPlan.net.

The 2040 projection results indicate existing housing units of 45,700 in the city limits; 104,800 people, and 98,500 jobs in the city and potential by 2040 for almost 6,300 new future housing units (including almost 1,000 new CU housing units) in the city, 18,200 new people (including group quarters), and 18,500 new jobs. Growth rates are based on an average residential rate of 0.6% and an average non residential rate of 0.7% annually. Current zoning allows greater capacity for jobs than housing, with housing reaching capacity by 2040 and an additional 34,200 jobs possible beyond 2040.

Subcommunity and Regional Fact Sheets

The city and county have prepared a series of ten Fact Sheets: one for each of the nine Boulder subcommunities, and one for Area III (located outside of the city but within the BVCP planning area). The sheets document existing land use, facilities, and demographic conditions at the local level and include historic information. Draft versions are on the [project website](#) and can be the basis for local Listening Sessions and focused planning at the local level to better understand needs that are more specific to localized areas rather than the entire Boulder Valley or citywide. The sheets are also being digitized to create online “stories” with interactive maps and data.

Trends Report and Top Trends

The Trends Report highlights Boulder’s trends and presents information at the city, county, and regional scales and organizes the information according to the sustainability framework. The

latest draft is online (available [here](#)) and incorporates input received from elected officials, boards, commissions, and city and county staff as well as some local agencies including the school district, CU, and others. For the community kickoff, the planning team distilled the cross-cutting trends into the posters and in the presentation, and as summarized below.

1. Boulder has Potential for Redevelopment—Mostly in the Northeastern Part of the Community
2. Boulder Continues to be a Center for Employment in the Region
3. Boulderites are Changing How they Travel – At least within the City
4. The Community is Taking Action and Getting more Prepared for Climate Change and Other Threats
5. Boulder’s Housing Types and Availability are Shifting Toward Multi-Family Units; Costs are Rising
6. Population is Growing and Aging
7. Social Disparities Exist; Some are Widening
8. People Seek more Walkable Neighborhoods
9. Healthy Living and Eating Continues as a Way of Life
10. Quality of Life is High

Interactive Mapping and 3D and Visualization

The planning team is working with ESRI to develop online interactive story board maps for different parts of the community. Online maps will have the ability to display different conditions and data as well as 3D buildings and topography. These maps can be the basis for scenario testing and analysis and visualization later in the planning process.

Focused Topics for the 2015 Update

At previous meetings of the Planning Board, Planning Commission, City Council, and the Board of County Commissioners have continually refined a list of focused topics for the 2015 Plan update. Some of the initial ideas evolved from findings of the Consultant Report from late 2014/early 2015 which incorporated feedback from several city boards, and the most recent community kickoff helped to further shape the topics, which generally are noted below.

“21st Century” Opportunities and Challenges

The Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan will integrate with other plans, initiatives, and emerging issues including:

- Aging Population – Age-friendly community (i.e., programs and policies to address anticipated needs of an aging population by 2040)
- Arts and Culture (e.g., policies from the Community Cultural Plan, work of the library, and other programs)
- Biodiversity (e.g., policies from urban wildlife, integrated pest management, and open space programs)
- Climate Action and Alternative Energy (e.g., policies and goals relating to the Climate Action plan and renewable energy goals)
- Community character – diversity (i.e., goals emerging from the Design Excellence project and Form Based Code pilot)
- Local Food (e.g., improving upon existing goals in the plan and incorporating new initiatives and programs relating to health, wellness, and local foods).
- Resilience / Regional issues (i.e., incorporating work from the 100 Resilient Cities grant program and coordination with the city’s Chief Resilience Officer)

Growth Management and Livability/Housing

The city and county may identify possible changes to the land use map in focused areas or policies to accomplish community goals such as housing or growth management, or to adjust the jobs and housing mix. Questions to address include:

- What should the future mix of jobs and housing be?
- What rate of growth (jobs and housing) is appropriate for Boulder?
- How can Boulder get higher quality buildings, public spaces, and infrastructure?
- How can Boulder reduce vehicular congestion – are there land use changes that might help mitigate congestion?
- Where are appropriate locations for future housing and what types are needed to address “missing middle” income ranges?

Neighborhoods and Character

The city has been hearing a lot of interest from neighborhoods in the past year to improve communications, address land use incompatibilities, and address other needs. The BVCP update can potentially address:

- Are there additional policies to preserve existing neighborhoods and housing?
- How can new development projects near and within neighborhoods be compatible and minimize impacts where people live?
- Where can services and infrastructure improvements make neighborhoods more walk-friendly?
- What programs, services, and infrastructure might be necessary to improve neighborhoods lacking such services?
- How can neighborhoods be more resilient and communicate better in times of emergency? How can they be better organized?

Improve Plan Document / Update IGA

Additionally, the 2015 BVCP plan can become one that:

- retains its long standing values but that contains a clearer, more graphic vision and values;
- has stronger links between the policies and actions and implementation; and
- is measurable with metrics and tied to data.

Renewal of the City/County Intergovernmental Agreement should also occur and be initiated well in advance of its expiration on Dec. 31, 2017.

NEXT STEPS

Mid-Sept.	Survey invitation mailed to 6,000 households; survey available online
Oct. 2	Change request period closes and staff begins review and analysis of requests
Mid-Oct.	Survey focus groups
Nov/Dec	Local listening tour
Dec. 15	Joint Study Session of the City Council and Planning Board to discuss Survey and focus group results; initial screening of requests; and focused topics for plan options and analysis (<i>Note: May get scheduled on Dec. 10 or early Dec.</i>)
Dec./Jan.	(<i>TBD</i>) Discussion with Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners

City Boards and Commissions Updates Scheduled:

Sept. 28	Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB)
Oct. 5	Downtown Management Commission (DMC)
Oct. 7	Landmarks Board
Oct. 7	Environmental Advisory Board (EAB)
Oct. 7	Boulder Design Advisory Board
Oct. 12	Transportation Advisory Board (TAB)
Oct. 14	Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT)
Oct. 21	Boulder Arts Commission (BAC)
Nov. 16	Open Space Board of Trustees
Dec. 2	Library Commission

Scheduling: Human Relations Commission